

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A method of delivering content to a network enabled device, the
method comprising:

transferring selected content to the network enabled device;

communicating, over a network, a license associated with the selected

5 content to the network enabled device, the license including access level information
defining conditions for controlling the network enabled device to produce a user-
perceptible form of the selected content when conditions defined by the access level
information are met and to inhibit production of a user-perceptible form of the selected
content when conditions defined by the access level information are not met.

10 2. The method recited in claim 1, further comprising:
receiving, at a first node on the network, a request for content from the
network enabled device at a second node on the network;

15 wherein the transferring of selected content comprises transferring the
requested content in response to the receipt of the request at the second node.

20 3. The method recited in claim 1, further comprising:
receiving, at a second node on the network, a request for content from
the network enabled device at the first node;

25 wherein the transferring of selected content comprises transferring the
requested content to the network enabled device at the first node, in response to the
receipt of the request at the second node.

30 4. The method recited in claim 2, wherein the license conditions
define a time window and a maximum permitted number of times within the window
that the content may be provided in user-perceptible form at the second node.

 5. The method recited in claim 4, wherein the time window is about
24 hours.

6. The method recited in claim 2, wherein the license conditions permit the content to be provided in user-perceptible form at the second node no more than once immediately after transferring the content.

7. The method recited in claim 2, wherein the license conditions permit the content to be provided in user-perceptible form at the second node no more than once within a time window starting immediately after transferring the content.

8. The method recited in claim 7, wherein the time window is about 24 hours.

9. The method recited in claim 1, wherein communicating a license over the network comprises communicating the license with the selected content.

10. The method recited in claim 1, further comprising providing an interface for allowing a user of the network enabled device to select an access level from a plurality of access levels, each access level defining a different set of conditions, wherein the license associated with the selected content includes access level information corresponding to an access level selected by the user.

11. The method recited in claim 10, wherein the plurality of access levels comprise:

a level defining a time window in which the network enabled device may produce a user-perceptible form of the selected content no more than once; and

a level defining a time window in which the network enabled device may produce a user-perceptible form of the selected content an unlimited number of times.

12. The method recited in claim 10, wherein the plurality of access levels further comprises a level in which the network enabled device may produce a user-perceptible form of the selected content no more than once, at any time.

13. The method recited in claim 10, wherein the plurality of access levels further comprises a level in which the network enabled device may produce a user-perceptible form of the selected content for any specified time period and an unlimited number of times.

14. The method recited in claim 10, wherein the plurality of access levels further comprises a level in which the network enabled device may produce a user-perceptible form of the selected content no more than once, immediately after transfer of the content.

15. The method recited in claim 10, wherein the plurality of access levels further comprises a level in which the network enabled device may produce a user-perceptible form of the selected content no more than once, immediately after communication of the license.

16. The method recited in claim 2, wherein the network comprises a wide area network and wherein receiving a request for content comprises receiving a request communicated over the wide area network.

17. The method recited in claim 2, wherein the network comprises a local area network and wherein receiving a request for content comprises receiving a request communicated over the local area network.

18. The method recited in claim 1, wherein transferring the selected content comprises transferring at least one electronic file.

19. The method recited in claim 1, transferring the selected content comprises transferring at least one encrypted electronic file.

20. The method recited in claim 2, further comprising:
providing an interface for allowing a user at the second node to select at least one content file from a plurality of content files;

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32. The system recited in claim 31, wherein the plurality of access levels comprise:

a level defining a time window in which the user network device may produce a user-perceptible form of the selected content no more than once; and
a level defining a time window in which the user network device may produce a user-perceptible form of the selected content an unlimited number of times.

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33. A method of acquisition of content by a network enabled device, the method comprising:

receiving selected content at the network enabled device;

10 receiving, by communication over a network, a license associated with the selected content, the license including access level information defining conditions for controlling the network enabled device to produce a user-perceptible form of the selected content when conditions defined by the access level information are met and to inhibit production of a user-perceptible form of the selected content when conditions defined by the access level information are not met.

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34. The method recited in claim 33, further comprising:

submitting, to a first node on the network, a request for content from the network enabled device at a second node on the network;

20 wherein the receiving of selected content comprises receiving the requested content in response to submitting the request at the second node.

35. The method recited in claim 33, further comprising:

submitting, to a second node on the network, a request for content from the network enabled device at a first node on the network;

25 wherein the receiving of selected content comprises receiving the requested content in response to submitting the request at the first node.

36. The method recited in claim 34, wherein the license conditions define

a time window and a maximum permitted number of times within the window that the content may be provided in user-perceptible form at the second node.

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37. The method recited in claim 33, further comprising accessing an interface for allowing a user of the network enabled device to select an access level from a plurality of access levels, each access level defining a different set of conditions, wherein the license associated with the selected content includes access level information corresponding to an access level selected by the user.

38. The method recited in claim 37, wherein the plurality of access levels comprise:

a level defining a time window in which the network enabled device may produce a user-perceptible form of the selected content no more than once; and
a level defining a time window in which the network enabled device may produce a user-perceptible form of the selected content an unlimited number of times.

39. A system for acquiring user access to content controlled by a server network device, the system comprising:

a user network device communicatively coupled to the server network device;

wherein the user network device is programmed to receive selected content at the user network device, and

wherein the user network device is further programmed to receive, by communication over a network, a license associated with the selected content at the user network device, the license including access level information defining conditions for controlling the user network device to produce a user-perceptible form of the selected content when conditions defined by the access level information are met and to inhibit production of a user-perceptible form of the selected content when conditions defined by the access level information are not met.

40. The system recited in claim 39, wherein the user network device is further programmed to submit to a first node on the network a request for content from the server network device;

wherein the user network device submits the request at a second node on the network and wherein receiving of selected content comprises receiving the requested content in response to submitting the request at the second node.

5 41. The system recited in claim 40, wherein the license conditions define a time window and a maximum permitted number of times within the window that the content may be provided in user-perceptible form at the second node.

10 42. The system recited in claim 39, wherein the user network device is further programmed to access an interface for allowing a user of the user network device to select an access level from a plurality of access levels, each access level defining a different set of conditions, wherein the license associated with the selected content includes access level information corresponding to an access level selected by the user.

15 43. The system recited in claim 42, wherein the plurality of access levels comprise:

 a level defining a time window in which the user network device may produce a user-perceptible form of the selected content no more than once; and

20 a level defining a time window in which the user network device may produce a user-perceptible form of the selected content an unlimited number of times.

 44. A business method for controlling distribution of content to a network enabled device, the method comprising:

25 transferring selected content to the network enabled device, the selected content being supplied by a content owner;

 communicating, over a network, a license associated with the selected content to the network enabled device, the license including access level information defining conditions for controlling the network enabled device to produce a user-perceptible form of the selected content when conditions defined by the access level information are met and to inhibit production of a user-perceptible form of the selected content when
30 conditions defined by the access level information are not met; and

charging a license fee to a user of the network enabled device based on a license access level.

45. The business method recited in claim 44, wherein charging the license fee to the user of the network enabled device comprises providing an interface for allowing the user of the network enabled device to select the license access level from a plurality of license access levels, each license access level defining a different set of conditions, wherein the license associated with the selected content includes access level information corresponding to the license access level selected by the user.

46. The business method recited in claim 45, wherein the plurality of access levels comprise:

a level defining a time window in which the network enabled device may produce a user-perceptible form of the selected content no more than once; and

a level defining a time window in which the network enabled device may produce a user-perceptible form of the selected content an unlimited number of times.

47. The business method recited in claim 44, further comprising paying to the content owner a percentage of the license fee charged for the license associated with the selected content.

48. The business method recited in claim 44, wherein demographic information associated with the license is used to compile a database of licensing information for various regions.

49. The business method recited in claim 48, wherein the database provides a plurality of parameters for available licenses for the content according to the determined geographical location of the user requesting the content.

50. The business method recited in claim 49, wherein the plurality of parameters comprises at least one of availability of the content at a particular time and availability of the content at a particular geographical location.

51. The business method recited in claim 48, wherein the licensing information is provided to content owners.

5 52. The business method recited in claim 49, wherein the geographical location of the user is determined from at least one of the user's credit card information, an IP address of the user's computer system, and geographical information provided by the operating system of the user's computer system.

10 53. The business method recited in claim 44, further comprising providing benefits to the user under defined circumstances.

54. The business method recited in claim 53, wherein the benefits comprise charging a reduced license fee for the content.

15 55. The business method recited in claim 53, wherein the benefits comprise coupons for purchase of merchandise.

20 56. The business method recited in claim 53, wherein the defined circumstances comprise at least one of promotional gifts to the user, rewards to the user for referrals, rewards to the user for multiple downloads of the content, rewards to the user for non-download transfers of the content, and rewards to the user for purchasing a bundle of the content.

25 57. The business method recited in claim 44, wherein charging a license fee comprises receiving payment information from the user of the network enabled device.

58. The business method recited in claim 57, wherein the payment information comprises the user's credit card information.